The Liberty of the Gospel explained, and recommended.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

Incorporated Society

FOR THE

Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts;

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

IN THE

Parish-Church of St. *Mary-le-Bow*;

On *Friday* the 15*th* of *February*, 1716.

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At the Anniversary Meeting of the Society.

ORder'd, That the Thanks of the Society be given to the Reverend Mr. *Hayley*, for his Sermon preached this Day before the Society; And that he be desired to Print the same.

David Humphreys, Secretary.

GALATIANS V. Ver. 1

Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage.

IN these Words, we read the *great End* of the *Gospel*, and the gracious Design of our *Saviour's* coming into the *World*; which was, to *proclaim Liberty to the Captives*, and to rescue Mankind from a State of *spiritual Bondage*. Isai. 61. 1.

And we read further in them, the great *Care*, and *Vigilance*, and *Fidelity*, of the *first Planters* of *Christianity*; how watchful they were, to guard the Disciples against all *unnecessary*

Impoſitions, either upon their *Faith*, or *Practice*; and how Induſtrious, to
Acts 20. 27. declare unto them *all the Counſel of God.*

A moſt uſeful and neceſſary Inſtruction ariſes from hence, to all ſuch as are engag'd in Propagating the Goſpel *Abroad*, and in Preaching of it at *Home*, and by which *both* of them ought to regulate their Conduct; Which is, to preſs nothing, as *neceſſary*, upon the the Belief of Mankind, but what is *plainly* and *evidently Reveal'd*; to make the BIBLE, and the BIBLE ALONE, their great and conſtant *Rule*; and to diſcard all Fondneſs for any particular Sett of *Diſputable Syſtematical Doctrines.* Then ſhall we truly follow *Apoſtolical Practice*, and be no Preachers *of our ſelves*, but of *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, and ſhew our
2 Cor. 4. 5. ſelves the *Servants of Mankind for Jeſus ſake.*

I hope therefore, I may, in ſome meaſure, anſwer the *Deſign* of our *preſent Solemnity*, and forward the *Great* and *Good Work* which *this Society* is engag'd in, if I take Occaſion from the Text to lay before you, the *Nature of that Religion* which we are endeavouring to Propagate, and the *Duty* of thoſe *Miſſionaries*, by whoſe

whose pious and prudent Labours we hope to bring *the Heathen into Christ's Inheritance, and the utmost parts of the Earth into his Possession.* Psal. 2. 8.

The Occasion of my Text, was an Attempt made by some *Judaizing* Teachers in the Apostle's Daies, to impose *Circumcision*, as necessary to Salvation, upon the *Gentile Converts*. Thus we read, *Acts* 15. 1. That at *Antioch*, the Place where the *Disciples were first call'd Christians, certain Men came down from Judea, and taught the Brethren, and said, Except ye be Circumcis'd after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.* Acts 11. 26. So *prone* are Mankind to run into *Arbitrary* and *Superstitious* Observances in *Religion*! And so *careful* ought the Lovers of *Truth*, and of *solid Virtue*, to be, to *guard against them!*

The Apostles set themselves every where, with great Industry, to oppose *this Error*, as having a Tendency to undermine *Christianity it self.* St. *Paul*, in particular, tells the *Galatians*, at the Verse immediately following my Text, *That if they were Circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing.* Gal. 5. 2. He lets them know, that the *Christian Religion* had exempted them, not only from *that Rite*, but from *all the other Ceremonial parts* of the *Jewish Law*; Insomuch

that neither the *Gentile Converts* were oblig'd to *take it upon them*, nor the *Converted Jews* themſelves any longer to *obſerve it*. He bids them therefore, *Stand faſt in that Liberty* which the *Goſpel* allow'd them, and not bring an unneceſſary Burden upon themſelves, by *putting ſuch a Yoke upon their own Necks, as neither their Fathers, nor Themſelves, were able to bear.*

Acts 15. 10.

From my Text then, I ſhall beg leave to obſerve to you, the following Particulars.

I. The great *Excellency* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, in that it has eſtabliſh'd Mankind in *Liberty*, and freed them from *Bondage*.

II. The *Duty* of the *Preachers* and *Propagaters* of the *Goſpel*, who ſhould, after the Example of our Apoſtle, labour to preſerve it in its *primitive Purity*; eſpecially conſidering the many *Corruptions* of it, and *Additions* to it, which *latter Ages* have introduc'd. And laſtly,

III. I ſhall take notice of ſome *particular Duties* incumbent upon

upon *all Christians*, which do necessarily result from a *just Reflection* upon the *whole*. And I shall conclude with an *Application* more peculiarly regarding *our Selves of this Nation*, as we have the *Christian Religion* in great *Purity established among us*, and as we are *Associated* to *propagate* it in the remotest Parts of the yet *Unconverted World*.

I begin with the first.

I. The great *Excellency* of the *Christian Religion*, in that it has establish'd Mankind in *Liberty*, and freed them from *Bondage*.

The *World*, when our Lord Jesus Christ appear'd in the Flesh, was universally over-run with *Ignorance* and *Error*; *Vice* and *Wickedness* had invaded it on the one hand, and *Formality* and *Superstition* had possessed it on the other. The *Heathen* had not the *Knowledge of God's Law*, and the *Jews* had grossly *corrupted it*; But when the *Sun of Righteousness* arose, he was *a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of God's People Israel*. He came *not* to *destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfil them*; To explain to the *Gentiles* the just *Bounds* and *Obligations*

Luke 2. 32.

Matt. 5. 17.

of the *Natural Law*; and to ſhew the *Jews*, the *Emptineſs* and *Inſufficiency* of their *Ritual* and *Ceremonial Worſhip*; from all further Obſervance of which they were, by the Publication of the Goſpel, diſcharg'd.

Hence it is, that the *Goſpel of Chriſt* is, by St. *James* call'd, *the perfect Law of Liberty*. And St. *Paul*, writing to the *Romans*, tells them, that they had not received *the Spirit of Bondage again to Fear, but the Spirit of Adoption*, whereby they were brought *into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God*; He ſhews them, that *there is no Condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus*; Becauſe *the Law of the Spirit of Life, hath made them free from the Law of Sin and Death*. In other places of Scripture 'tis call'd *Light*; *And Believers* are ſtyl'd, *Children of Light, and of the Day*; and are ſaid to be *call'd out of Darkneſs*. All which is ſpoken in relation to that groſs *Ignorance*, and thoſe habitual *Corruptions*, in which the *Gentiles* were involv'd, before the *Goſpel Truths* were revealed to them, whereby their *Underſtandings* were *enlighten'd*, and their *Manners reform'd*, and themſelves ſet at Liberty from the *Power*, as well as freed from the *Puniſhment* of their Sins.

James 1 25.

Rom. 8. 15.

Rom. 8. 21, 1, 2.

Jo. 3. 19. 1 Theſſ. 5. 5. 1 Pet. 2. 9.

Sins. Thus the *Gospel* gave *Light to them that sat in Darkness, and in the shadow of Death, and has guided our feet into the way of Peace.* Luke 1. 79.

And as to the State of the *Jews* before their Conversion to Christianity; Their *Worship* consisted in so many *burdensome Rites*, and such a Number of *Superficial* and *external* Performances, that their *Religion it self* was a kind of *Slavery*; And the *Precepts* of it are call'd, *Weak and Beggarly Elements*, that *gender'd to Bondage, under which* the *Observers* of them were *kept*, and shut up as it were as *Prisoners, till Faith came*, and rescued them from the *Law*, that *Schoolmaster*, which was *to bring them to Christ*, who made them *all Children of God*, and *Heirs of Salvation.* Gal. 4. 9. Gal. 3. 23, 24, 26, 29.

Thus has the *Gospel* instructed us in the *true Nature* both of *God*, and of our *Duty*. That *God is a Spirit, and that they who worship him, must worship him in Spirit, and in Truth*; That no *Superficial external* Performances are, in Themselves, of *any Value* in his sight; But that 'tis the *Heart*, and *Affections*, the *inward* Bent and Tendency of the *Mind*, that *He* chiefly regards in all our Services. Jo. 4. 24.

When therefore the Soul of a Man is

is thoroughly ſeaſon'd with the *true Spirit* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, his *Zeal* will not reſt upon a bare *Modal Worſhip*, and carry him no further than the *Formalities* of Religion; No! This will lift up his Thoughts to the *Higheſt Heavens*, and make him contemplate upon the *Infinite Perfections* of the *Great God*; Whom he will look upon as the *Eternal Source* and *Original* of *all Being*, as the *Gracious Preſerver* of *Men* and *Angels*, and as the ultimate *Scope* and *End* of all our *Actions*; Inſomuch that he will be able to uſe the Pſalmiſt's Expoſtulation, and truly ſay, with him, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon Earth, that I deſire in Compariſon to Thee.*

Pſal. 73. 24.

And to a like exalted Degree of *Brotherly Affection* towards *Each other*, the *Goſpel Truths* would naturally lead us, did we but let them have their *full Influence* upon us. They would diveſt our Minds of all *narrow* and *confin'd Notions* of *Love*, and *Friendſhip*, which tie down a Man's Regard and Concern to thoſe only of his *own Nation*, or *Country*, or *Kindred*. We ſhould from hence be inſtructed, that the *Chriſtian's Neighbourhood* has no other *Bounds* ſet it, than the Confines of the *Earth it ſelf*; that *all Mankind* are *Brethren* by *Nature*; and that *all Chriſtians*

Christians are more strictly United by *Grace*; That, consequently, *Compassion* and *Love* are Debts, *naturally due*, to every one that carries about with him any share of our *Creator's Image*, as being *Children* of the *same common Parent*; And that the *highest degree* of *mutual Affection* should knit together the Hearts of those, who are already *spiritually United* to *Christ*, as *Members* of his *Mystical Body*, the Church, and as having a *joynt-Interest* in the Merits of Him, their *one common Redeemer*.

Thus again, The *Doctrines of Christianity*, if duly attended to, would regulate and reform every thing that were amiss in the *private* Conduct of our *own Lives*; By giving us a *just Dominion* over *our selves*, and not suffering *any unreasonable Passion* to *disquiet* us, or *Brutish Lust* to *enslave* us. From hence we should learn, that to be immers'd in *sensual Enjoyments*, and to spend our whole time in the pursuit only of *Bodily Gratifications*, is but a *poor Employment for a Reasonable Being*; That it is the chief Business of the *Rational Life*, to *moderate* and *subdue* the turbulent Motions of the *Sensitive Appetite*; That *to live up to the strictest Rules* of Right Reason, is to advance our selves to the *Height* and *Perfection* of *Humane Nature*; And that an *Entire*

tire Conqueſt over all the irregular Tendencies of our *Stubborn Wills*, and *Vicious Affections*, is to make our
Rom. 8. 37. ſelves *truly free, and more than Conquerors.*

Such as *theſe* are the Thoughts which the *Purity* of the *Chriſtian Religion* would inſpire us with; It would give us juſt apprehenſions both of our *State* and *Obligations*, in *whatever Capacity* we conſider'd our ſelves; Whether in relation to *God*, our *Neighbour*, or *our ſelves*. With reſpect to *God*, That we are *frail and dependent Creatures*, the Work of his Hands; that we owe our very *Being* to his *Power*, our *Subſiſtence* to his *Providence*, and all our *Happineſs* to his *Bounty*; And that conſequently, all *Obedience*, and all *Acknowledgments*, muſt be due to *Him*, the Source and Origin of all; And
1 Cor. 6. 20. we muſt *glorify God, in our Body, and in our Spirit, which are God's*, as the Apoſtle directs us.

With reſpect to our *Neighbour*, That he is our *Brother*; that he is the *Servant*, and the *Subject*, of *God*; that he bears our *Creator's Image*; And
Rom. 14. 15. that he is *one for whom Chriſt dy'd*; And that upon all theſe accounts, therefore, he has a *Right* to our *Juſtice*, *Affection*, and *Reſpect*.

With

With Regard to *our ſelves*, that we are *Reaſonable Beings*, that we have *Immortal Souls*, and that they are both capable of, and deſign'd for, very great Degrees of *Happineſs* in a *future State*; And that, therefore, it behoves us to *ſoar above* the Objects of *Senſe*, and to look beyond theſe poor Earthly Enjoyments, leſt we ſhould forfeit the Privileges of our High-Birth, diſhonour our Heavenly Parentage, and by making Choice of theſe *temporal things*, as our *Portion*, *finally loſe the things that are Eternal.* 2 Cor. 4. 18.

Theſe are the *free Principles* of the Chriſtian Religion, and are what our Apoſtle in another place calls, *Gold, Silver, and precious Stones*, built upon the *Foundation*, which is the *only Foundation*, *Jeſus Chriſt*; And they are ſuch as will *abide the Fiery Tryal*, when the *Wood*, and the *Hay*, and the *Stubble*, ſhall be *burnt up*. *Theſe*, therefore, St. *Paul* exhorts his *Galatians* to *adhere to*, and to direct their Actions by, and *not* to *relapſe again*, either into the *Formal Ceremonious* Obſervances of their *Jewiſh* State, or into the groſs *Ignorance*, and *Corruptions*, and *Idolatries*, of their *Gentile* one; But to take care, to keep themſelves from coming under the *Yoke* of the 1 Cor. 3. 12, 11, 14.

One,

One, or into the *Bondage* of the *other*. Which brings me to the *Second* Particular I propos'd to consider, *viz.*

II. The *Duty* of the *Preachers* and *Propagaters* of the *Gospel*, who should, after the Example of our Apostle, labour to preserve it in its *primitive Purity*; especially considering the many *Corruptions* of it, and *Additions* to it, which *latter Ages* have introduc'd.

The very *Titles* and *Characters*, which are given to the Preachers of the Gospel, in the Books of the New Testament, do sufficiently intimate, and point out their *Duty* to them. In that they are call'd the *Ministers* of Christ, and of God, 'tis signify'd, that they are not to be look'd upon as the *Authors* of our Salvation, but as *Officers only*, who may be *Helpful* and *Subservient* to it; And that, consequently, they are not of themselves to *constitute* and *prescribe* the Laws of the Christian Covenant, but to *publish only*, and *declare* them. And hence the Apostle to the *Corinthians* expostulates with them, *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollo, but Ministers by whom ye believ'd, even as the Lord gave to every Man?* And he elsewhere tells them upon what *Foundation* he went in the *Correction* of some *Irregularities*

1 Cor. 3. 5.

and

and *Abuses*, which they had run into, in the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*; For, says he, *I have receiv'd of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you.* *Happy* would it have been for the *Christian Church*, if every *Successor* of the Apostles, had neither claim'd any other *Authority*, nor preach'd any other *Doctrine*, than what had been *receiv'd from the Lord to be delivered to us!* The grossest *Idolatry* could never have crept into *this Holy Ordinance*, nor the grossest *Superstition* have defac'd the *Purity* of the *Christian Worship*. 1 Cor. 11. 23.

Thus likewise, the Characters of being *Ambassadours for Christ*, and *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, which are given to the Ministers of the Gospel, do *both* intimate to them, That they ought to have a great regard to the *Extent* of their *Commission*, and to the *Discharge* of their *Trust*. For *Ambassadours* must regulate their Conduct according to the *Powers* and *Instructions* they receive; And *moreover it is requir'd in Stewards, that a Man be found Faithful*, as the Apostle says. 2 Cor. 5. 20. 1 Cor. 4. 1. ver. 2.

Now the Ministers of the Gospel can never better *answer* these *High Characters*, or consult their *own Dignity*, than thus to keep within the *Bounds*

Bounds of their *Heavenly Commiſſion*, to preach the *plain* and *Naked Truths* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, and to leave all *Worldly* and *Political Diſputes* to the Perſons converſant in them, and to whom they properly belong. Thus would they become *able Miniſters of the New Teſtament*; They would by ſuch a Conduct, render both their *Perſons Acceptable*, and their *Doctrines Powerful*. The *Authority* of their *Maſter*, would then accompany the Publication of his *Laws*; Their *ſpeaking* would be *as the Oracles of God*; And it would be at the exceeding great *Peril*, and even the *Loſs of the Salvation*, of all thoſe who ſhould contemptuouſly *refuſe* to *Hear*, and to *Obey*. For we find this moſt Solemn *Sanction*, given by our Saviour Himſelf, when he at firſt iſſu'd out his *Commiſſions* to the *Preachers of the Goſpel*, Luk. 10. 16. *He that heareth you, heareth me; And He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; And He that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* And again, in another Place, he ſays, *Go ye unto all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature; He that Believeth, and is Baptized, ſhall be ſav'd; And He that Believeth not, ſhall be Damned.*

2 Cor. 3. 6.

1 Pet. 4. 11.

Mark 16. 15, 16.

A

A most *dreadful Sentence* this! which our Lord has already pronounc'd against *Infidelity*; And which he will hereafter confirm, against *all Unbelievers*, who shall have been found *obstinately* to have *rejected* the Evidences of the *Christian Religion*; At *that Day, when he shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not his Gospel; Who shall be punish'd with Everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.* 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8, 9.

And as there is this *severe Denunciation* against all those who *disregard* the *Ministers of the Gospel*, and *reject* their *Doctrine*, whilst they act within the *Bounds* of their *Commission*; So likewise is there *as dreadful a Wo* pronounc'd against the *Ministers themselves*, if they *abuse* the *Powers* they are intrusted with, and *impose* upon the *Consciences* of their Hearers, by publishing their *own mistaken Opinions*, and *erroneous Decisions*, as the *true Doctrines* of Christianity, and then requiring Men to *Believe* them as strictly and explicitly, as the *necessary Truths* of the *Gospel*, and with *Threats* of the *same Punishment* upon their *Refusal*.

But *wiſe* and *underſtanding* Chriſtians will not be thus frighten'd out of their *Senſes*, and out of the *Truth*, by ſuch Imaginary Thunderbolts; When they are ſure they have the *Goſpel* on their ſide, they need not be much concern'd at ſuch *groundleſs Terrors*. For all the *Artillery* of *Human Anathema's*, for the Eſtabliſhment of *Error*, can do *no Execution* upon the Profeſſors of the *Truth*; They will, indeed, have a *fatal Effect*, when they are *turn'd*, as they ſhall be, upon the *Enemies* of it; for they will draw down the *Divine Vengeance* upon their Heads. Our Apoſtle has already, at the beginning of this Epiſtle, in a moſt ſolemn manner, pronounc'd
Gal. 1. 8. their *Doom*; *Though We*, ſays he, *or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that which we have preach'd unto you, let him be Accurs'd.* And he *repeats* the Sentence, in the next Verſe, to make it the more *Anfal*; *As we ſaid before, ſo ſay we now again,*
ver. 9. *If any Man preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that ye have receiv'd, let him be Accurs'd.* He ſpeaks this with reſpect to thoſe who would have impos'd *Circumciſion* upon the *Gentile* Converts; But it ſtands with *equal Force* againſt the Addition of *any other unneceſſary Articles* in Chriſtianity; which is

is directly to *alter* the *Terms* of the *Christian Covenant*, and to be guilty of what the Apostle here calls, *the preaching of another Gospel.*

Now if Believers were so *early perverted* from the *Simplicity* of the *Gospel*, as that the *Apostle* could, even in his *own Dates*, complain of their *Defection*; and say, *I marvel, that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the Grace of Christ, unto another Gospel*; It is the *less* to be wonder'd at, if in these *Later Ages* there should appear occasion for a *more Universal Complaint.* And indeed, so *numerous* have been the *Additions*, and so *gross* the *Corruptions*, that have overspread the Face of the Christian Church, That, at the Time of the *Reformation*, to be Baptiz'd into, what was then styl'd, the *Catholick Church*, was, strictly speaking, to be call'd *unto another Gospel.* And though it has pleas'd God, to enlighten the Understandings of some *few Communities* of Christians, who have *Protested* against *these Corruptions*, and profess the Gospel, *as the Truth is in Jesus*; Yet there are *greater Numbers* still involv'd in this *dark State* of *Spiritual Bondage*; and are under the Influence and Directions of *such Guides* as have

Gal. 1. 6.

Ep. 4. 21.

corrupted the *whole Maſs* of Chriſtianity, and have chang'd the *Simplicity* of the *Goſpel*, and the *plain Duties* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, into what is little better than *Jewiſh Superſtition*, or *Gentile Idolatry*; Inſomuch that they can neither *Read the Scriptures*, or *Pray to God*, or *Receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, as they ought, without either incurring the Cenſure of their *Governours*, or falling under the Diſpleaſure of *God*. For the BIBLE, that *Key of Knowledge*, is taken from them; And *Saints* and *Angels* are become the *Objects* of their *Prayers*, inſtead of the
Joh. 17. 3. *One only true God*, whom they ought to
1 Tim. 2. 5. invocate, through the *alone Mediation* of *Jeſus Chriſt*; And the *Cup* is not only *deny'd* them, in the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*, contrary to the *Original Inſtitution* of it, but is made, together with the *Bread* then diſtributed, the *Object* of *Adoration*; And thereby a *plain Inſtitution* of Jeſus Chriſt, is turn'd into a direct Act of *Idolatry*. Now,
James 3. 10. Beloved, *Theſe things ought not ſo to be*. And therefore I ſhall beg leave, to proceed to my *Third* general Head; under which I am to take Notice,

III. Of ſome *particular Duties* incumbent upon *all Chriſtians*, which do neceſſarily

ceſſarily reſult from a juſt Reflection upon the *Whole*. And,

(1.) The *firſt* Thought that does naturally offer it ſelf to us from what has been ſaid, is *This*; That ſince the *Chriſtian Inſtitution* is of ſo excellent a Nature, and ſo highly conducing to the *Liberty* and *Happineſs* of Mankind; It muſt doubtleſs be the indiſpenſable *Duty* of *all thoſe*, who have been call'd to the *Knowledge of it*, and live under the Light and Influence of the *Goſpel*, to do what in them lies, to *propagate* the ſame throughout *all the World*; That *God's Way may be known upon Earth, his ſaving Health among all Nations.* Pſ. 97. 2. This is what they owe to *God*, whoſe *Will* it is, That *all Men ſhould be ſaved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth.* 1 Tim. 2. 4. 'Tis what they owe to our *Bleſſed Saviour*, whoſe *Honour* they are bound to advance, by endeavouring to *increaſe* his *Subjects*, and thereby *enlarge* his *Kingdom*. And 'tis what they owe, out of the ſtricteſt Obligations from Love and Charity, to the *Souls of Men*, who, by this Means, may have *their Eyes open'd, and be turn'd from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God; and thereby receive forgiveneſs of Sins, and Inheritance among them which* Acts 26. 18.

are sanctify'd, by Faith that is in Christ.

(2.) *Another* Consideration, arising from a just Reflection upon what has been said, is this; That since there have been Attempts made, more or less, in all Ages of Christianity, by the *Perverseness* and *Superstition* of such Men, whose *Zeal* has run *too fast* for their *Understandings*, to *corrupt* the Simplicity of the *Gospel*; It must needs be a *Duty* highly incumbent upon every *Christian*, who has any Regard to his own Spiritual Liberty, or the Purity of Christ's Religion, to examine into the Foundations of his *own Faith* and *Practice*, and see, whether or not they are agreeable to the *standing Truths* reveal'd in *Scripture*. Because, 'tis to *these* our Apostle directs us, as the *Rule* by which we are to regulate our *Conduct*; and *not* to give up our *Understandings*, to be led blindfold, by the Directions of *any Guides*, whose Pride and Vanity may declare themselves *Infallible*.

'Tis plain, that our Apostle, by bidding us *Stand fast in our Christian Liberty*, does thereby empower us, to *judge of*, and *examine*, the *Doctrines* that are taught us; and even to *reject* them, when they appear to have *no Foundation* in the *Gospel*; Nay, tho' an *inspir'd Apostle*,

Apostle, or even an *Angel from Heaven*, should pretend to come commission'd to deliver them. And much *more* so, therefore, may we *judge of*, and *reject*, such *pretended* Doctrines of Christianity, as only the *common* and *ordinary* Pastors of the Church have introduc'd; And which are so *plainly contrary* to *Holy Scripture*, that nothing but the greatest *Ignorance*, and the grossest *Corruption*, could have establish'd them. *Such* are those *new Doctrines*, added to the ancient Creed, by a late Council, in a Neighbouring Church, concerning *Purgatory*, *Transubstantiation*, the *Worship of Images*, the *Invocation of Saints*, the *Communion in one Kind*, and that *the Church of Rome is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches*, and that *there is no Salvation to be had out of her*, with several *other Points*, which have *either no Foundation* in *Scripture*, or are *directly contrary* to it; And yet are now requir'd to be *believ'd*, as of *equal Necessity* to Salvation, with the *Apostles Creed* it self. Coun. of *Trent.*

But no Persons, or Church, upon Earth, have any Authority to make *such Additions* as *these* to the Christian Faith; Or indeed to make any *Change* in the Doctrine of the Gospel, as published by the *Apostles*, either by tak- Arch. Bp. *Tillotson's* Serm.

ing from it, or adding any Thing to it, as *neceſſary* to be *Believ'd* or *Practis'd*, in Order to Salvation. And for any particular Chriſtians to reſign up their own *Underſtandings* and *Judgments* to the arbitrary Dictates of ſuch *imperious Guides*, is to diſobey the Commands of their great Lord and Maſter in Heaven, and to *call another Man Maſter upon Earth*, which is what we are expreſly *forbidden* to do in the *Goſpel*.

Matt. 23. 8.

(3.) Since it is the Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion, to *enlighten* the *Underſtandings* of Men, to *free* them from *Ignorance* and *Superſtition*, and to eſtabliſh in their Minds the Principles of *Righteouſneſs* and *true Holineſs*; It muſt be the *Duty* of every Profeſſor of it, to lead a *Life anſwerable to it*; To *adorn the Doctrine of God, Our Saviour, in all Things*; To *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called*; and to behave ourſelves *as Children of the Light, and of the Day. Let every one*, therefore, *who nameth the Name of Chriſt, depart from Iniquity.* Let us *ſubdue* every unreaſonable *Luſt*, and irregular *Paſſion* in us, and caſt off the *Bondage* of all *Habitual Sin*. Let us ſeaſon our Minds with *true* and *inward Piety*, and *have our Converſation*

Tit. 2. 10.
Eph. 4. 1.
1 Theſ. 5. 5.
2 Tim. 2. 19.
2 Cor. 1. 12.

versation in the World in Simplicity, and Godly Sincerity. Then shall the Testimony of a *good Conscience*, be our *present Rejoicing*, and the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, our *future Reward.* Let us consider, that the Light of the Gospel, by giving us a more clear and distinct *Knowledge* of our Duty, has vastly increased our *Obligation* to it; That we must not *now* content our selves with a bare *outward* and *external* Worship, but remember, That *except our Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Thus neither *Hypocrisie*, nor *Superstition*, must be admitted into the Christian's Breast. The *true Israelite* must have *no Guile.* His *Understanding* must be regulated by the naked Evidences of *Truth*, and his *Will*, and his *Affections*, must readily obey it, by *doing justly, and loving Mercy, and walking humbly with his God.* But lastly,

Col. 1. 12.

Matt. 5. 20.

Jo. 1. 47.

Micah 6. 8.

(4.) To apply what has been said *more particularly* to *our selves of this Nation*, both as we have the *Christian Religion* in great *Purity establish'd* among us, and as we are engag'd in Endeavours to *propagate* it, in the *foreign unconverted* Parts of the World.

As

As we are a *Chriſtian Nation*, we have great Reaſon to *bleſs God* for that *Light of the Goſpel* which we enjoy. He has, indeed, done great Things for us, in eſtabliſhing us in *Liberty*, and freeing us from *Bondage*. For it pleaſed God to call *us* of *this Iſland* very *early* to the Knowledge of the Goſpel; and even *again* to enlighten us with *Divine Truth*, by *reſtoring* it to us in *greater Purity* than among any of our *Neighbouring Nations*, after it had lain, for many Ages, moſt groſly *corrupted*. And hereby he has put us under a *double Obligation* to *ſtand faſt* for the *future* in our *Chriſtian Liberty*, and to keep our ſelves from being *any more intangled* with the *Yoke of Bondage*.

And yet, ſo *little ſenſible* have we been of theſe *great Mercies*, and ſo very *backward* to anſwer the *Obligations* ariſing from them, that many of us have been but too ready, both to *encourage*, and to *join in*, a late *deſperate Attempt*, which, had it not *miſcarry'd*, muſt have rooted out the *Proteſtant Religion* from among us, as well as have overturn'd that *happy Government* we are under. And even *now*, it ſeems, tho' nothing has yet appear'd *equal* to the Wiſdom of his

his *Majesty's Councils*, and the Strength and Power of his *Armies*, there is still so much of the same *Popish Leaven* remaining, as is likely to create a *new Ferment* in the Nation; and that gives but too much *Encouragement* to the *Enemies* of our *Religion* and *Government*, to hope for *Success* in the Attempts they are continually making for the *Subversion* of *Both*; and may possibly invite *another Foreign Invasion*, and thereby involve us *again* in *War* and *Bloodshed*.

And to help forward this hopeful Design, of destroying the Protestant Religion, there are lately at *Home*, of our *own selves*, *a Set of Men arisen*, *speaking perverse Things, to draw away Disciples after them*; Who hope, by *New Doctrines*, to *overturn Foundations*, and to regain by the *Pen*, what they are not likely to compass by the *Sword*; For they would build a truly *Schismatical*, but by themselves *absurdly* call'd, *A Catholick Church of England*, upon such a Set of *Principles*, as are form'd *on Purpose*, to overthrow our whole Establishment by the late happy *Revolution*; And which, in their *Consequences*, would sap the *Reformation* also; And so bring us back again to our *former*

Acts 20. 30.

former Superſtitions, and our *old Anti-chriſtian State.*

2 Pet. 2. 21. But, *better would it have been for us, not to have known the Way of Righteouſneſs, than after we have known it, thus to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto us.* And therefore, ſince Gal. 5. 13. we have been *call'd unto Liberty*, let us *ſtand faſt in it*; and *not give Way* to any *ſlaviſh Doctrines.* Our Apoſtle, with Relation to his *Galatians*, wiſhyer. 12. es, in this Chapter, *That they were even cut off who troubled them.* The leaſt that we ought to do as *Chriſtians*, is, to put a *Guard* upon our ſelves, that we be not *perverted* by them; To acquaint our ſelves with the *true Nature* of the Chriſtian Religion, and *to contend earJude v. 3, neſtly for the Faith, which was once deliver'd unto the Saints*, that it may not be *corrupted* by thoſe *who Separate themſelves.*

19. There are laudable Attempts made, by many *good Men* and *Religious Societies*, in this City, to *correct* this *Bad Humour* which has overſpread the Nation, and has ſuch a tendency to *deſtroy*, both our *Religion*, and *Liberties.* And if the *early inſtructing of poor Children* in the Principles of *true Religion*, the *promoting Chriſtian Knowledge* among the *more ignorant Grown Perſons*, and the *Reformation of the Manners* of the moſt openly *Profligate*, are

are likely means to *Effect it*, we have reason to hope we may see, in a short time, this *happy Alteration*. And a *publick Acknowledgement* of these *publick Services*, is the least that is due to those *Worthy Persons*, who have voluntarily engag'd in the Trouble, and Expence, of *these Undertakings*.

But to leave the State of Religion at *Home*. Let us cast our Thoughts upon what is the *direct Aim* and *Business* of our *present Society*, The *Propagation of Christianity Abroad*, among the *Barbarous Nations* in *America*, both in the *Islands*, and on the *Continent*. And here, truly, are the *greatest Difficulties* to be encounter'd, and *such*, as nothing, but the *Indefatigable Industry* of *this Society*, and a greater Number of *Subscriptions*, and larger *Benefactions*, and *God's peculiar Blessing* upon the *Whole*, can possibly *surmount*. I must beg leave, therefore, from this Place, to call upon *all Orders and Degrees* of Men amongst us, from the Highest to the Lowest, to joyn in the Advancement of this so *Great*, and so *Good*, a Work. And if they retain any *grateful Sense* of the *Benefits* which they *themselves* have received from the *Gospel*, it will spur them on, to a hearty *Concurrence* in this *Noble Design*, and

to

to the affording their *chearful*, and *bountiful Aſſiſtance*, towards the ſupporting of the Meaſures which are taken for the *Propagation* of *this Goſpel* in *Foreign Parts*; in ſuch Parts of the World, as have *not yet* been *enlighten'd* by it, or are in danger of having this Light *extinguiſh'd* among them. Let
Eph. 5.8. us reflect, That *We our ſelves* were *ſometimes Darkneſs*, tho' *now* we are *Light in the Lord*; and that the *Advantages* which we have receiv'd from the *Zeal* of *others*, who labour'd *our Converſion*, ought to *kindle our own*, 'till the *common Benefits* of Chriſtianity have reach'd the *uttermoſt Corners*
Luke 3.6. of the Earth, and *all Fleſh have ſeen the Salvation of God*.

Let us remember, that the *Goſpel* is call'd *Good Tydings of great Joy*, and that its *Benefits* were deſign'd to be
2. 10. *extended unto all People*. And we cannot be heartily convinc'd of the *Truth*, nor perſwaded of the *Excellency* of the Chriſtian Religion, nor be truly ſenſible of the *vaſt advantage* it is of, to the *Whole Race of Mankind*, unleſs we deſire at the ſame time that the *Privileges* of it may be actually convey'd upon *all*; We cannot pretend to be the *Children* of the *Kingdom of Chriſt*, without wiſhing to ſee it continually

tinually *enlarg'd*, and effectually endeavouring to *promote it*; And it is *part* of the *daily Prayer* he has taught us to make, *That his Kingdom may come*, which we cannot expect it will do, 'till *the fulness of the Gentiles is come in.* Matt. 6. 10. Rom. 11. 25.

May, therefore, the *Idols* of the *Heathen* speedily give place to the *Name of Christ* in all parts of the *Pagan World*! And may the *Purity* of the *Gospel* shine *brighter* and *brighter* throughout every part of the *Church of Christ already settled*! May it particularly be always publickly profess'd in its *Simplicity*, for our *Honour*, and our *Happiness* in *these Kingdoms*! And may there never be wanting a *Powerful Defender* of the *Christian Faith*, till *all the Kingdoms of this World, are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, when* God himself *shall Reign for ever and ever.* Amen. Rev. 11. 15.

FINIS.

A SHORT ABSTRACT

Of the Proceedings of *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, from *February* the 17th 1715. to *February* the 16th 1716.

THE Society having very much exceeded their Income, by their common and extraordinary Disbursements last Year, and thereby well nigh exhausted that charitable Fund, which had been collected from their last Royal Brief, found it necessary to begin this Year with Resolutions of *Retrenching* such a Part of their Expences, as could be best spared, without prejudicing the Success of the good Work they have undertaken.

Their reducing thus their Yearly Expences, so as to bring them to a nearer *Equality* to their Income, was judged absolutely necessary, in Order to be just to those Engagements they lye under to their Missionaries, and others, till such Time as they can, by future private or publick Benefactions, acquire a sufficient Fund for the Support of

their Charges, whereby they hope to be enabled, both to increaſe the Number of their Miſſionaries, and to augment their Salaries, that there may be a better Encouragement for worthy Men, to engage in the Labours and Difficulties of this moſt Chriſtian Deſign.

The Society, in order to leſſen their Expences, have agreed to allow *no Aſſiſtants* to their Miſſionaries for the preſent; and for ſome Time to avoid engaging in any *New-Charge*. By theſe Methods, and other Incidental Vacancies, which have fallen out this Year, by the Death, and Return, of Miſſionaries, the Society have leſſen'd the Demands upon them 320 *l. per Annum.*

But notwithſtanding the *Difficulties* the Society has ſtruggled with, they have, beſides their great, conſtant, and ſtanding Expences, in Salaries to Miſſionaries, Catechiſts, *&c.* been likewiſe at an *extraordinary Charge* for extraordinary Emergencies, in ſupplying their Miſſionaries, both with *Money*, and *Books*. As, particularly, in ſupporting their Miſſionaries in *South Carolina*, during the Calamities which befel that Country, in the late War with the Savage *Indians*, by a Gratuity of 20 Pounds each, to the Reverend Dr. *le Jau*, Mr. *Johnſtone*, Mr. *Guy*, Mr. *Bull*, Mr. *Jones*, Mr. *Maul*, and Mr. *Haſſel*; And a Year's Salary to Mrs. *Martha Osborn*, Widow of the Reverend Mr. *Nathaniel Osborn*, who was a great Sufferer in thoſe Calamities, and dy'd in the Service of the Society. And a further Gratuity of 30 *l.* each, to two Foreign Miniſters there, Meſſieurs *La Piere* and *Richburg*, upon the Account of the great Loſſes they ſuſtained at that Time from the *Indians*, and the preſſing Streights they were driven to; inſomuch that, as the Society has been informed from ſeveral Hands, they could

not

not have ſubſiſted, but for that compaſſionate Relief of the Society. To which may be added, a Gift of 30*l.* to the Reverend Mr. *Poyer*, towards defraying the Charges of a Law-Suit, for the Recovery of his legal Salary, which he engaged in, by the Order and Direction of the Society.

Beſides theſe extraordinary Diſtributions in *Money*, the Society have been at a conſiderable Charge this Year, in purchaſing of *Books*; ſuch as Bibles, Common Prayer Books, Catechiſms, *&c.* ſeveral Parcels of which have been ſent to their Miſſionaries, to be diſtributed among their Pariſhioners, as they ſhould judge moſt proper and convenient; To theſe we may add the no ſmall Expence the Society has been at, in the printing and publiſhing 3000 Copies of their Anniverſary Sermon; And the Purchaſe of 550 Common-Prayer Books, laid up in the Society's Store-Room, and ready to be ſent upon any proper Occaſions.

The Society have been ſupported in theſe occaſional Expences, and encouraged to expect the like Aſſiſtances for the future, by the ſeveral following *caſual Benefactions*, which have been received, and reported, within the Space of this laſt Year; *viz.* 100*l.* from Mr. *Laurence Park* of *Barton-Bendiſh*, in *Norfolk*, bequeathed to the Society by his laſt Will, and reported by the Reverend Dr. *Bradford*. 100*l.* from a Widow Gentlewoman, who deſires to be unknown, by the Reverend Dr. *Butler*. 5 Guineas from a Perſon unknown, by the Reverend Dr. *Toriano*, lately deceaſed. A Carolus Broad-piece of Gold from a Young Gentlewoman in the Country, by the Reverend the Dean of *Chicheſter*. 2*l.* promiſed Annually from Mr. *John Burnell*, Collector of the Exciſe for *Middle Wales*, reported by Sir *John Phillips*. A

Guinea from an unknown Perſon, by the Reverend Dr. *Waugh*, as alſo another Guinea, at another Time. 10 *l.* from Mrs. *Lettice Tuffnel*, and 5 *l.* from a Perſon unknown, both by the Hands of Mr. *Burrel*; 5 Guineas from Mrs. *Stafford*, by the Right Reverend the Lord Biſhop of *Ely*; 10 *l.* from a Perſon unknown, by the Reverend Mr. *Tudor*; 1 *l.* 5 *s.* 6 *d.* from a Perſon unknown, by Mr. *Newman*. 10 *l.* from Mr. *John Allyn*, by Mr. *Henry Lowth*. 5 *l.* from a Perſon unknown, by Mr. *Thomas Head*. 10 Guineas from the Reverend Mr. *Doughty*, Miniſter of *Strandground* in *Huntingtonſhire*, by the Reverend the Dean of *Peterborough*; who reported likewiſe a Legacy of 50 *l.* bequeathed to the Society by the laſt Will of Mrs. *Sedgewick* of *London*, Widow. 30 *l.* from a Gentleman of *Exeter*, by the Reverend Mr. *Richard King*. 20 *l.* from the Right Honourable the Counteſs Dowager of *Berkley*; and 20 *l.* from the Right Honourable the Counteſs Dowager of *Northampton*, both by the Reverend Mr. *Laſingby*. 5 *l.* from Mr. *Abraham Harriſon* of *Greenwich*, by the Reverend Mr. *Stubs*. 100 *l.* a Legacy bequeathed to the Society by the laſt Will of Mr. *Richard Smith*, by the Hands of the Reverend Dr. *Gaſcarth*, Mr. *Henry Hargrave*, and Mr. *Nicholas Owen*, Executors of the ſaid Will. 20 *s.* from the Reverend Mr. Archdeacon *Wilſon*, of *Nottingham*, by the Reverend Mr. *Shute*. Beſides ſeveral other Benefactions paid into the Hands of their Treaſurer, which have been reported to the Society by him, as they have been received; one of 20 Guineas, from an unknown Perſon; another of 10 Guineas, another of 2 Guineas, both from Perſons unknown; as alſo a Legacy of 200 *l.* left the Society by the late Sir *Samuel Moyer*, and paid by his Lady. Under this

this Head we may add, as a Benefaction to the Society, a Promiſe made by the Right Reverend the Lord Biſhop of *London*, to Print, at his own Charge, the *Liturgy of the Church of* England, in the *German* Language, in order to eaſe the Society from that ſo conſiderable an Expence, which they had engag'd in; and alſo to preſent the Society with a certain Number of Copies for their Uſe. For all which ſeveral Benefactions beforementioned, the Thanks of the Society have been returned, to the Perſons known, by the Hands of thoſe who brought, or reported their Benefactions; and thoſe charitable Perſons, who have thought fit to conceal their Names, are hereby deſir'd to accept of the Society's moſt grateful Acknowledgements.

The Society have received ſome farther Aſſiſtances from the Choice and Subſcriptions of *New Members*, whoſe Names, not mention'd in the laſt Account, are as follows, *viz.* The Reverend Mr. *Daniel Debat*; Major *Aſcough* of *Kent* Eſq; The Reverend Mr. Arch-Deacon *Yeats*, Miniſter of St. *Mary Iſlington*; Colonel *Spotſwood*, Lieutenant Governour of *Virginia*; His Grace the Lord Arch-Biſhop of *Dublin*; The Reverend Mr. *Macro*; His Excellency *Thomas Pitt* Eſq; Governour of *Jamaica*; The Reverend Dr. *Lupton*, Prebendary of *Durham*; Dr. *Henchman*, Chancellour of the Dioceſe of *London*; *Joſeph Hyleyſ* Eſq; Counſellor at Law.

The Society's Miſſionaries being oblig'd by their Orders to keep a conſtant and regular Correſpondence with the Secretary, the Society has by them, and others, been inform'd, that their Endeavours, both as to the *Converſion* of the *Infidels*, and the *Reformation* of the *Diſorderly* and *Irreligious*, have been attended with good Succeſs; That

That many of the *Mohauk Indians* have been *converted to the Faith, and Baptized*; That ſeveral Negroes, and many other adult Perſons, as well as Infants, had been Baptiz'd, in the Provinces of *New-York*, *Maſſachuſett's-Bay*, *South-Carolina*, and other Places; and that the religious Books ſent over by the Society, to be diſtributed upon proper Occaſions, and in proper Places, had very much contributed to forward the good Deſigns of the Society.

As to the Society's Affairs in *Barbadoes*, they are come now to a Reſolution, to begin to lay the Foundation of *Codrington College*, without any further Delay; having judg'd the Fund they have in Hand, with what will Annually ariſe from their Eſtate there, ſufficient to ſupport that great Undertaking. And accordingly they have given Orders to their Commiſſioners there, to be preparing Stone and Lime for that Purpoſe, and have ſent over ſeveral Thouſands of Bricks, and have procur'd an Order from the Admiralty Board, to the preſent Commander of the *Stationary* Man of War for that Iſland, to Aſſiſt the Society's Agents, when it can be done without Prejudice to his Majeſty's Service, in fetching of Timber from the adjacent Iſlands within the Juriſdiction of the Government of *Barbadoes*; and they have appointed a Committee to receive Propoſals from Workmen, and to treat with them; who have actually agreed with Several, and are daily treating with others, to be ſent over upon that Occaſion. So that this Building is now in a good Forwardneſs, and is deſign'd not to be in the Form of a *perfect Quadrangle*, but to have the *Eaſt* Side, which lies to the Windward, left open; which, in that hot Climate, will much conduce to the Healthfulneſs of the Place.

The

The State of the Society's *Accounts* for this Year, as deliver'd in by their Sworn Auditors, is as follows, *viz.*

Receipts.

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
By Annual Subscriptions of Members	661	11	06
By Rent	65	08	05
By Casual Benefactions, Arrears of Collections, *&c.*	759	02	00
By Monies paid at the Entrance of New Members	12	18	00
By Interest	80	02	02
	1579	02	01
To which add the Ballance of the last Account	1847	18	05
Total	3427	00	06

Disbursements.

By Payment of yearly Salaries to Missionaries, Catechists, and Schoolmasters, Gratuities, *&c.*	2633	10	08
Remaining in Cash, and *East India* Bonds	793	09	10
Total	3427	00	06

Yearly Income.

By Annual Subscriptions of Members	693	17	00
By yearly Rent of Lands purchas'd with Monies given for that purpose	55	00	00
Total	748	17	00

Yearly

Yearly Expences.

	£.	s.	d.
By Yearly Salaries to Missionaries, Catechists, and Schoolmasters	1681	00	00
By yearly Salaries to the Treasurer, Secretary, and Messenger	190	00	00
Total	1871	00	00

According to which, the Society's certain yearly Charge exceeds their certain yearly Income by the Sum of 1122 03

The *BARBADOES* Account.

Receipts.

	£.	s.	d.
By 60 Hogsheads of Sugar in hand, and 120 since imported, and sold	3186	09	00
By Interest of 4000*l.* in *East-India* Bonds, more than was paid at the Purchase	86	18	10
	3272	07	10
To which add the Ballance remaining at the last Audit	3823	17	08
Total	7096	05	06

Disbursements.

	£.	s.	d.
By yearly Salaries, *&c.* to Catechists, and Gardener; And in purchasing Goods for the Service of the Plantations; and in Necessaries for Building *Codrington* College, with Officers Salaries, and otherwise	2460	16	10
Remaining in Cash, and *East-India* Bonds, besides 32 Hogsheads of Sugar yet unsold, and Interest of 3300*l.* vested in *East-India* Bonds, from the 31st of *March* last, not yet received	4635	08	08
	7096	05	06

FINIS.